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MONTANA WEATHER AND CROP SUMMARY

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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WEATHER SUMMARY, 6-MONTHS,
OCTOBER 1969 THROUGH MARCH 1970

Generally speaking, Montana experienced an "open winter" during the past six months. In contrast to the winter of 1968-69 when cold temperatures and deep snow were the rule, mild weather and light snowcover prevailed through much of the winter with cold, snowy weather being the exception. There were no widespread severe storms although some sections did experience brief, local blizzard conditions on several occasions. These conditions occurred mostly in the north-eastern sections of the State.

For the six month period temperatures averaged very close to normal Statewide with precipitation averaging from near to above normal. The greatest departures from normal occurred in the southwestern division where temperatures averaged 1.4°F above normal for the six month period, and the southcentral division where 1.28 inch more precipitation than normal occurred. Temperatures were cooler than usual during October and March Statewide, with January's temperature also being below normal over the plains. February was a very mild month with temperatures averaging from 5 to 9 degrees above normal.

October 1969 was the coldest October since 1925 in most sections of the State as temperatures varied from 5 to 9 degrees below normal. The month was dry west of the Continental Divide but was wet elsewhere as snow fell in widespread areas during the first, second and fourth weeks of the month.

Mild weather became established in the State in November and for the most part continued through February except for below normal temperatures east of the Rockies during January. There were several cold periods during these four months but cold spells were of short duration.

Blustery weather was characteristic of March as winds were stronger than usual with temperatures averaging below normal and precipitation generally above normal. Marked day to day changes were common as frequent frontal systems crossing the State kept the weather unsettled. Snowfall was heavy throughout the month in the higher elevations as mountain snowpacks increased significantly.

OCTOBER 1969 -- MARCH 1970

6-MONTH CROP AND LIVESTOCK SUMMARY

HARVEST WEATHER GENERALLY IDEAL: Small grain harvest was carried out under nearly ideal weather conditions and was completed in most areas by October first. Potato harvest was nearly half complete, sugarbeets 10 percent dug, and over 80 percent of the corn silage was in the silo by October 1. Potato harvest was delayed by freezing weather in mid-October and some damage to the crop occurred. Harvesting of late crops were nearly complete in all areas of the State by November 1.

WINTER WHEAT SEEDED UNDER POOR CONDITIONS: Although weather for harvest was very good, planting of the 1970 winter wheat crop was delayed two to three weeks because of dry soil conditions. Seeding reached 95 percent completed by October 25. However, the amount seeded was greatly reduced by the poor conditions. Stands were reported as fair to good throughout the State.

Wind damage during this period was light. Dry soil and cool temperatures kept growth of the newly seeded crop below normal. Snowcover was minimal throughout the winter. However, very little winter kill occurred since there were no severely low temperatures. The crop began to green in western Montana and in scattered areas east of the Continental Divide by the end of March. Field work for 1970 has been held to a minimum by cool spring weather.

HEAVY USE OF WINTER RANGE: Movement from summer range on October 1 was 45 percent completed for cattle and 35 percent for sheep. Ranges were generally open throughout most of the winter months which allowed above normal usage of winter pastures. The mild fall and early winter allowed cows and ewes to gain additional weight for the coming calving and lambing season. Supplemental feeding was light as ranges were open to grazing and weather was mild. By mid-December only about half the state's range livestock were receiving supplemental feed. Grazing was closed in the eastern and western thirds of the State in January and nearly all livestock were receiving supplemental feed on February 1. Hay and grain supplies were adequate to carry livestock to summer pastures.

Calving, lambing and shearing began in early February. Weather conditions remained near ideal through March, and newborn lambs and calves were in above normal conditions. Death losses in all areas of the State were below normal. Many winter ranges were open to grazing virtually all winter but supplemental feeding was required to maintain livestock condition. More than 90 percent of the range livestock were receiving supplemental feed at the end of March. On April 1 calving had passed the half-way mark. Lambing was 45 percent and shearing was 35 percent complete.

PRECIPITATION: 6-Month Total, October - March 1970, and Normal

6-Month Precipitation			6-Month Precipitation		
STATION	October - March		STATION	October - March	
	1970	Normal		1970	Normal
<u>NORTH CENTRAL DIVISION (Cont.)</u>					
Del Bonita	4.37		Shelby AP	2.23	
Dunkirk 14NNE	2.93	2.73	Shonkin 7S	12.46	
Dupuyer 7WNW	2.02		Simpson	1.07	2.04
Fairfield	1.81	2.40	Sweetgrass	1.56	
Forks 4NNE	4.19		Telegraph Creek	4.08	2.76
Ft. Assinniboine	2.05	2.69	Tiber Dam	1.99	
Ft. Benton	4.74	4.45*	Turner	2.00	
Geraldine	5.09		Valier	2.77	2.50
Gildford	1.73		Zortman	6.66	
<u>CENTRAL DIVISION</u>					
Augusta	2.36	3.76	Martinsdale 3NNW	3.22	3.05*
Austin 1W	5.47		Melstone	4.19	3.30
Barber	3.48		Moccasin Exp. Sta.	4.29	3.09
Canyon Ferry	3.41		Neihart 8NNW	8.48	
Cascade 5S	3.25	3.82	Rogers Pass 6NNE	6.68	
Cascade 20SSE	4.00		Roundup	2.52	2.71
Denton INNE	4.63		Roy 8NE	3.33	
Flatwillow 4ENE	3.05	3.04	Roy 24NE	2.14	
Gibson Dam	6.09	5.48	Ryegate 18NNW	3.72	
Grass Range	4.11		Stanford 1WNW	5.20	3.77
Great Falls WBFO	4.55	4.35	Sun River 5SW	2.25	
Harlowton	3.75		Toston 3SW	3.74	
Helena WBO	3.55	3.36	Townsend	4.16	
Holter Dam	2.31	3.42	Utica 11WSW	5.99	
Judith Gap 13E	6.48		White Sul. Spgs.	3.95	7.27
Lennep 6WSW	8.32		White Sul. Spgs. 24NW	7.26	
Lewistown FAA AP	7.35	4.50	Winifred	3.17	3.70
Lincoln	7.28				
<u>SOUTH CENTRAL DIVISION</u>					
Ballantine	4.86	3.59	Huntley Exp. Sta.	4.50	3.52
Belfry 4SSW	2.95		Hysham	4.53	
Big Timber	4.70	4.30	Joliet	4.76	
Billings WP	4.69	3.97	Kirby IS	10.42	
Billings WBO	5.45	4.50	Livingston	4.38	
Bridger	5.17		Livingston FAA AP	4.61	4.14*
Broadview	3.97		Melville 4W	3.42	
Busby	6.69	3.22	Mystic Lake	9.98	8.77
Columbus	3.26	3.75	Rapelje 4S	4.73	3.70
Cooke City	14.45		Red Lodge	12.61	6.63
Custer	4.06		Wilsall 8ENE	7.48	
Gardiner	3.03		Wyola	9.38	5.12*
Hardin	5.03		Yellowtail Dam	7.48	

* Estimated Normal

PRECIPITATION: 6-Month Total, October - March 1970, and Normal

6-Month Precipitation			6-Month Precipitation		
STATION	October - March		STATION	October - March	
	1970	Normal		1970	Normal
<u>NORTHEASTERN DIVISION</u>					
Bloomfield 6E	1.55		Mosby 2ENE	3.23	
Bredette	2.14		Mosby 10N	2.65	
Brockway 3WSW	2.04		Nohly 3WNW	1.43	
Circle	3.42	2.05*	Opheim 12SSE	1.84	
<u>WESTERN DIVISION</u>					
Alberton	8.03		Missoula 3NE	7.70	5.29
Big Arm	7.58		Missoula WBO	6.28	5.49
Big Fork 13S	10.89		Olney	10.41	
Creston	8.83		Ovando	7.52	8.15
Darby	6.61	8.24	Paradise	9.85	
Deer Lodge 3W	2.40		Pleasant Valley	8.55	10.85
Drummond	4.81	3.74*	Polson Kerr Dam	6.91	
E. Anaconda	2.76	4.79	St. Ignatius	7.08	5.79
Elliston	5.13		St. Regis	10.15	
Eureka	5.31		Seeley Lake	14.07	
Fortine 1N	5.56	8.44	Stevensville	5.19	6.14
Hamilton	6.14	5.55	Sula 1NE	5.10	
Heron 2NW	21.06	24.10	Summit	22.74	
Hot Springs	6.74		Superior	7.86	8.78
Hungry Horse Dam	19.53		Swan Lake	20.05	
Kalispell WBO	7.76	7.33	Thompson Falls	11.83	12.62
Kila	6.96		Trout Creek	18.35	
Libby 1NE	9.67	11.77	Troy	12.86	
Libby 32SSE	14.24		Troy 18N	18.66	
Libby Dam	7.03		West Mont. Br. Sta.	3.89	
Lindbergh Lake	16.61		West Glacier	15.62	16.32
Lolo Hot Spgs. 2NE	13.94				
<u>SOUTHWESTERN DIVISION</u>					
Alder 17S	3.42		Jackson	4.20	
Belgrade FAA AP	5.82	4.17*	Lakeview	8.24	
Bozeman MSU	7.92	6.48	Lima	2.05	2.72
Bozeman 6W	5.97		Norris 3ENE	5.34	
Bozeman 12NE	20.84		Norris Madison PH	4.94	5.81
Butte FAA AP	2.43	3.15	Pony	5.11	
Dillon FAA AP	2.11	2.12*	Trident	3.26	
Dillon WMC	2.24	3.22	Twin Bridges	2.16	
Divide 2NW	3.07		Virginia City	5.62	4.42
Ennis	3.99	2.28	W. Yellowstone	9.08	11.59
Gallatin Gtwy. 26SSW	10.09		Whitehall 7E	2.51	2.11
Glen 4N	.86		Wisdom	3.09	
Hebgen Dam	16.24	14.53			
<u>NORTH CENTRAL DIVISION</u>					
Babb	4.83	6.02	Goldbutte 7N	2.45	
Big Sandy	4.22	2.82	Harlem	2.24	3.35
Blackleaf	2.57		Havre WBO	1.95	3.28
Brady	2.03		Iliad	3.97	
Browning	2.83	4.64	Joplin 1N	1.86	
Chester	1.94		Loma INNW	3.40	
Chester 26WNW	3.31		Lonesome Lake	3.28	
Chinook	2.84	3.27	Loring 10N	2.83	
Choteau	3.09	2.11	Malta	2.73	3.00
Cleveland 5ENE	4.65		Malta 35S	4.24	
Conrad	2.29	2.69	Rudyard 30N	2.75	
Cut Bank FAA AP	2.89	2.41	Saco INNW	2.71	

* Estimated Normal

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STATION	October - March 1970	Normal	STATION	October - March 1970	Normal
<u>NORTHEASTERN DIVISION (Cont.)</u>					
Cohagen	2.45		Poplar	2.26	
Culbertson	2.51	2.50	Raymond Border Sta.	1.64	
Fort Peck	2.19		Redstone	2.24	
Glasgow W30	2.50	3.01	Richey	2.70	
Glendive	2.58	2.02	Savage	2.10	2.59
Maxby 18SW	4.70		Scobey	2.47	
Mindale	2.67		Sidney	2.23	2.76*
Jordan	3.01	2.50	Vida	4.37	4.43
Lambert	2.22		Westby	2.27	
Lustre 4NNW	2.74	1.97	Wolf Point 4ESE	2.75	
Medicine Lake 3SE	2.32	2.42			
<u>SOUTHEASTERN DIVISION</u>					
Albion IN	2.97		Miles City FAA AP	5.03	3.13
Biddle 6SW	3.05		Mispah 4NNW	2.87	
Boyes	3.59		Moorhead 9NE	4.51	
Brandenberg	5.05		Offer 9SSW	0.03	
Broodus	3.94	3.75*	Plevna	2.33	2.90
Carlyle 12NW	2.80		Powderville 8NNE	2.44	
Colstrip	5.69	4.65	Ridgway 1S	3.44	
Forsyth	3.35		Sonnetto 2WNW	5.28	
Ingomar 11NE	2.08		Terry	1.20	
Mildred	2.04	2.80	Terry 21NNW	3.43	
Miles City	2.59		Wibaux 2E	3.13	

* Estimated Normal

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